ON SCENE

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ON SCENE

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COVER: *Line Tender keeps line out of the water while practicing Beach Rescue Techniques at Coast Guard Station Tillamook. See "Beach Rescue Techniques" article, page 19.*

ON SCENE is a quarterly, authorized, special interest publication, produced by the Office of Navigation Safety and Waterway Services for members of the U.S. Coast Guard and the SAR community. Editorial content is not to be considered as authority for official action, nor as record material. Individual views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Transportation or the U. S. Coast Guard.

CHIEF, OFFICE OF NAVIGATION SAFETY
AND WATERWAY SERVICES
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20593-0001

July 30, 1990

To "On Scene" Readers:

The enduring tradition of assisting mariners in distress has earned the United States Coast Guard a worldwide reputation as the premier lifesaving organization. The search and rescue mission is a source of personal pride and satisfaction for all Coast Guard men and women. It is the lifeblood of our service from which we find strength and motivation to carry out myriad additional missions.

Admiral Kime, in his change of command address, emphasized that search and rescue will continue to be a national and a Coast Guard priority. As the new Chief of the Office of Navigation Safety and Waterway Services, I eagerly look forward to carrying out the Commandant's direction while working with you to meet every challenge. The protection of life and property in the inherently dangerous maritime environment demands our devotion and industry.

SEMPER PARATUS!

R. A. APPELBAUM
Rear Admiral, U. S. Coast Guard

Letters to the Editor

Editor's note: The following letter is from the Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak to Commandant (G-NRS).

I thoroughly enjoyed QMC Dave Ginsburg's article **"SAR Initial Actions Interviewing Techniques"** which appeared in ON SCENE 3/89. I personally feel that a SAR Duty Officer, whether he is a boat coxswain, pilot, Group Duty Officer, or OPCEN watchstander, can put a significant slant on a SAR story (intentional or otherwise). Our interface with the public is sensitive, and the slightest nuances can create a negative impression.

I have long been offended by a piece of SAR jargon which has crept into our lexicon since the mid-seventies or so. I see the term "NEGRES" used prolifically in SITREPS, search action plans, and press briefings. Interpreted quite literally, it infers that a unit searched and obtained negative results. This is an outrageous contradiction in terms; usually in the same message we are saying "subject remains unlocated", "eastern one-half of area A-1 completed with coverage factor of 1.0", "case pends" or something to this effect. In other words, if we took some action, there was a measurable result, even if the outcome of the effort was not yet successful. As an aside, this term could have a potentially disastrous connotation if taken out of context by someone unfamiliar with the SAR business. I have witnessed the radio transmission "searched Bravo Two with NEE-GERS".

I asked my senior SAR watchstander, QMC WEBB, to research this issue and attempt to validate the term as a standard, authorized abbreviation in either SAR or COMMS reference manuals. He has been unsuccessful thus far.

I respectfully request that we eliminate this term from our SAR vocabulary and avoid putting the wrong "spin on the ball" in future sensitive operations.

M. J. SMITH

The above letter was discussed at the 1990 SAR Conference. The unanimous opinion was that Commandant should encourage the removal of "NEGRES" from the SAR vocabulary. It was recommended that terms like "Search object(s) not located in search area/during search" be used instead.

Dear ON SCENE Editor,

QMC Ginsburgs remarks on interviewing techniques was right on. Especially his comments regarding urgency. I get very upset listening to all of the "Drivil" we send out over the radio waves in the name of getting info on SAR cases. Often we fail to get the pertinent info such as position and POB. It has been embarrassing at times. I listened to several cases involving vessels sinking or medevacs and was appalled at what I heard. On the sinking case there was some confusion on location and several units including Group RM's handled the case. At no point did one ask how many POB but rather home addresses, etc.. I'd sure like to know how many people I am looking for if the vessel did go down. On the medevac case the RM's asked all kinds of useless info while the skipper was trying to revive the patient, who was his brother, get the vessel headed

for home and give the info needed to airlift the patient. Once the RM started asking useless or unnecessary info you could here the change in his voice, it was like dealing with a bureaucrat at the DMV.

To top all of this off, we ask all this info and then tell the boater he is in no danger and we will do a MARB. No wonder no one wants talk to us.

A. C. Beal CWO4
Commanding Officer
Station Castle Hill
Newport, RI 02840

Dear ON SCENE Editor,

The article on R&D for study on the effects of crew fatigue in the 3/89 issue, pg 11 is worthwhile and necessary.

Question – Though you are not the WPB program manager, shouldn't this study be expanded to include WPB's? Presently there are no justified fatigue standards for WPB's and as we tend to maximize the resource we may be placing our crews in danger.

Our progress in surface safety concerns (for crew fatigue) are moving slow – hopefully though still moving forward. Thanks for listening.

B. Ing
Commanding Officer
USCGC NUNIVAK
(WPB 1306)

Dear Editor:

Congratulations to the Alaska Legislature! They passed a milestone in providing safety for all Alaskans when they passed Senate bill 59, the mandatory seat belt use law. This law will save many lives on the trails, streets and highways of Alaska.

But what about safety on the water routes many Alaskans use as a major source of travel and recreation? The death toll from pleasure boating accidents in Alaska is continually 25 to 35 times, higher than the national average. The Alaska State Legislature should do something about these grim statistics as well. The people of Alaska should demand a state Safe Boating Law.

Alaska is the only state without the protection of a law requiring safety or lifesaving equipment on boats operating in state waters. There is also no coordinated, statewide educational program to teach even the most elementary points of boating safety. A Safe Boating Law could fill both of these life-threatening voids.

Most of us see the newscasts about seamen lost while fishing in the Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea and Southeast Alaska waters. But what most people don't know is that 70 percent of Alaska's boating fatalities occur on the interior waters of Alaska–waters outside federal jurisdiction!

In 1987, 22 people in Alaska died from fires. The legislature passed a law requiring smoke detectors. In 1987, 46 Alaskans died in boating accidents. In fact, since 1985, over 200 recreational boaters in the state of Alaska have died. It's past time for an Alaska Safe Boating law.

Sincerely,
D. A. WORTH
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Commander, Seventeenth Coast Guard District
(Acting)

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
AUXILIARY

OFFICE OF THE
NATIONAL COMMODORE

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6 June 1990

Commandant (G-NRS-2)
Editor, ON SCENE
U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters
2100 Second Street, SW
Washington, DC 20593

Dear Editor,

As a member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary and a long-time reader of ON SCENE, I want you to know how much I enjoy your most informative magazine.

I have also noted that recently there seem to be more articles about members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary and their accomplishments. On behalf of all Auxiliarists I thank you most sincerely for recognizing our members who do so much to support the Coast Guard and the recreational boating safety program.

Yours truly,

Henry G. Pratt III

Rescue & Survival Systems Notes

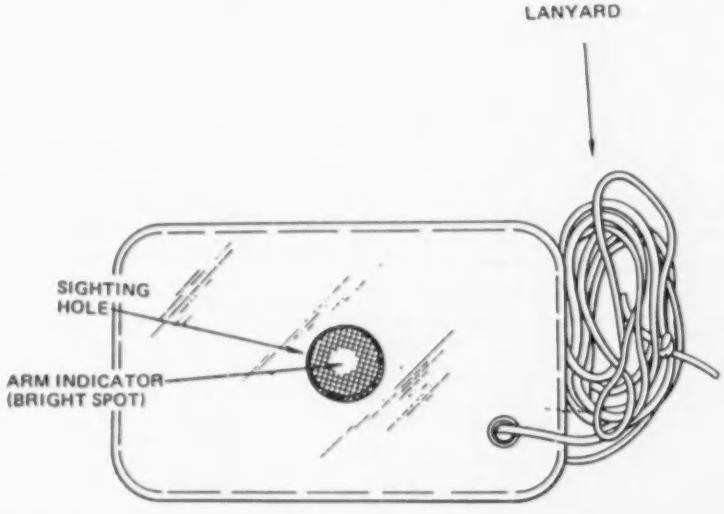
By: CWO Mark O. Hyde, G-NRS-2

The summer transfer season has arrived and I find myself in front of a computer trying to figure out which key works what function. I am relieving CWO Seybold as the Rescue and Survival Manager for the Search and Rescue Division, Facilities Branch here at Headquarters.

Webster's dictionary defines the word Manager as one that directs a team. In order for a person to effectively manage a team I feel that the team must provide input to the manager. The next time you feel that your survival equipment could be improved, it is your responsibility to give me a call. This way the job doesn't become a one way street. It's hard for an individual driving a desk to determine what exactly your needs are in the field without any input. My number is FTS 267-1585. If you don't have FTS the area code is (202).

If all goes well, you should be receiving change 1 to the Rescue and Survival Systems Manual before you receive the next copy of On Scene. I also hope to visit some of the field units for a better feel of your needs and requirements. I look forward to working with and hearing from you.

EMERGENCY SIGNALING MIRROR



What is the best Emergency Signaling device?

How many times have you looked in your boat crew signal kit or PFD and found the Signaling Mirror broken? Or how about this scenario, your cold wet hands are untieing your signaling mirror and you see about two flashes as it descends to the bottom of the ocean.

It's a problem that has now been resolved. The new emergency signaling mirror that you receive from the stock system (NSN 6350-00-105-1252) is made from a acrylic plastic that is unbreakable and floats. Also with every piece of survival gear we try to find a dual purpose for it. The improved survival mirror can also be shaved with a knife to make tinder for a fire.

By the way your best emergency signaling device is a radio. The signaling mirror is a close second and has been spotted over 100 miles away by rescue aircraft.

SURVIVAL VESTS

Occasionally, we receive calls from a number of field units requesting permission to use a supplemental survival vest to carry the boat crew signaling and survival equipment.

Several companies now manufacture lightweight nylon mesh vests which are ideal for storing survival equipment. Although no requirement exists for these vests, and they are not covered in the CG Rescue and Survival Systems Manual, these vests may be used. Should you decide to purchase such a vest, it should fit comfortably over your present PFD or anti-exposure protective clothing. Also, ensure the vest does not interfere with LE gear.

Commandant (G-NRS) is currently developing an inflatable PFD similar to those used by our aviation counterparts. This vest will provide approximately 32 pounds of buoyancy. It will have the same righting characteristics as a CG-approved Type I PFD (capable of turning an unconscious victim face-up in the water), and will incorporate stowage pockets for survival equipment. Its basic design will be quite similar to the mesh survival vests many units are already using.

So long

After six years at Headquarters, I'm finally putting my fingers to the keyboard for the last time. It's been an enjoyable tour but I'm ready to move on.

One of the pleasures of working at Headquarters has been working for and with you, "THE PROFESSIONALS" in the field, to improve the quality of equipment and procedures pertaining to rescue and survival equipment. I've met and talked with a number of you and truly say thanks to all I have dealt with.

Survival is a field that is constantly changing. I've tried to maintain the old, and upgrade to state-of-the-art equipment while working with a limited budget. I hope you feel the surface community's rescue and survival systems program has improved in the last six years.

I've started some new programs that, hopefully, will bring the surface community into the twenty-first century. CWO Mark O. Hyde is my replacement and I'm sure he will be working hard to keep you outfitted with the latest in rescue and survival technology. I'll be in the great Northwest at MSO Puget Sound (Seattle), enjoying life. Once again, thanks for allowing me to serve you.

- CWO Steve Seybold

CASP Correction & Improvement Project

By: CDR Steve R. Osmer, G-NRS-1

Work continues on the CASP correction and improvement effort by personnel from the CG Operations Computer Center, the CG Research and Development Center, the International Ice Patrol, the CG Academy, and the National SAR School.

Several software corrections and computational validations were made to CASP prior to the April 1990 SAR RCC Controllers Conference and announced to the field by message. Chief among the corrections was the FNOC sea current direction fix. Subsequent testing revealed previously unknown errors associated with CASP's special Florida Straits, Georges Bank and Gulf Stream sea current files under certain conditions. Correction of these were also included in the version released just prior to the April Conference. The suspected wind vector addition problem is actually in a program that creates the wind driven current file CASP uses from FNOC wind data. Whether a problem really exists or not depends upon how the data is interpreted. This is being investigated further by oceanographers. The bottom line is that all known errors in CASP's retrieval and use of environmental data have been corrected.

The Second CASP Coordination Meeting was also held in conjunction with the SAR Conference; the CASP team members reviewed the effort to date and ensured progress as planned continued.

The effort this summer will primarily concentrate on continued functionality testing of the input environmental files and investigating incorporating both higher quality and world wide data fields.

The SAR School has plans to resume instruction on CASP during the MRCC courses this 4th quarter. We also intend to eventually rewrite the CASP Users Manual. In the meantime, the OPCENs are encouraged to use both the OPINS User Manual (COMLANTAREA INST 16122 dtd 15 Oct 1987) and the CASP Correspondence Manual (Pamphlet No. D41401) as guides to the CASP System.

In an attempt to be ready for the planned OCC computer replacement in FY93-94, a FY92 RCP has been submitted for a CASP software rewrite. This is necessary since CASP is dependent on the present mini-computer's utilities; CASP cannot be transported to a replacement computer until its software is rewritten. This rewrite effort will remove utility dependence, incorporate technology upgrades, and include computational efficiencies.

The soon to be released new CG Addendum to the National SAR Manual includes a section on CASP. For the first time CASP is mandated as a search planning tool (the incidents when CASP is to be run are listed); the actual use of the CASP information remains the discretion of the SAR planner.

Commandant (G-NRS) message R050028Z MAY 90 requested that Commandant (G-NRS), OCC, IIP, and R&DC be made information addressees on the final SITREP of cases where CASP was run. This information will be helpful in detailing actual CASP usage and bringing potential system problems (and successes hopefully) to the attention of the individuals who may be able to take action on them.

Functionality Requirements for the CASP System have been prepared by Commandant (G-NRS) with assistance from the R&DC, OCC, and IIP. They are now in review. These Functionality Requirements are important for several reasons. For the first time since CASP became operational in 1974, there will be a document that says what CASP is supposed to do. These requirements will be the baseline for the functionality assessment of CASP during the rewrite effort.

MEDEVACs: Air Transportation Between Medical Facilities

By: LT Richard Schaefer, G-NRS-1

We recently reviewed a copy of an investigation regarding an island nation to island nation, hospital to hospital, transfer of a car accident victim in a coma. After many delays in arranging the transfer, the patient was flown by Coast Guard HH-65 helicopter. The patient died enroute as a result of his many injuries. The death was not the result of our handling of the case, but it did create added complications. A brief description and analysis of the case follows.

The Case

The Coast Guard handled a request for a hospital to hospital transfer of a patient who had been in a car accident. In this case there was a local government requirement that a doctor in country (the destination country) accept the patient ahead of time, and a hospital be designated the receiving hospital. This requirement resulted in several hours delay.

The Coast Guard OPCEN received the request from the sending hospital, and consulted the flight surgeon at the air station. The choices for transporting the patient were a Coast Guard HH-65 helicopter currently on a law enforcement mission in the area with no medical personnel, or launch a separate HH-65 with medical personnel. Based on the speed with which it could respond, the first helo was diverted. The need for a medical attendant was to be addressed by the sending hospital.

The helo spent some time on the ground at the sending island waiting for the o.k. to transfer the patient. Eventually, as the delays over the doctor and hospital requirement continued, this first helo was directed to return to the air station. Finally, after both doctor and hospital were confirmed, a second helo (duty helo) was launched. Because the sending hospital refused to provide a medical person, due to high cost of returning to the island, the flight surgeon went on the flight.

The patient, in a coma with multiple injuries, was taken on board the Coast Guard helo and flown to the destination island. About two-thirds of the way there the patient went into cardiac arrest. Unsuccessful attempts by the flight surgeon and helo crew were made to revive the patient. After landing the flight surgeon and waiting ambulance crew evaluated the patients condition. He was pronounced dead shortly after. Once dead the ambulance crew refused to take the body and departed. This left the helo crew on the ramp with the body for over an hour until the police accepted the body. The helo then returned to the air station.

The Policy

Section 1015 of the Coast Guard Addendum to the National SAR Manual contains the policy regarding MEDEVACs of this nature. Let's examine this case from the viewpoint of the policy.

1015 Air Transportation Between Medical Facilities

Criteria for the use of Coast Guard aircraft for the emergency transfer of critically ill or injured patients into and between Veterans Administration hospitals has been developed and should be used as a guide for all requests for such transfers between other medical facilities as well.

Clearly, this case falls within this policy.

These criteria are:

a. Suitability and availability of aircraft;

The HH-65 used in this case was adequate.

RCCs, OPCENs, air stations, and flight surgeons involved in this type of MEDEVAC should review carefully the possible requirements for the patient during a flight, require adequate medical equipment and personnel, and provide an aircraft equal to the task. If none is available, it may be time to seek other resources. If the emergency is great enough (your call), use the resource available, accepting the limitations and risks involved. If the aircraft is not suitable and the risk to the patient is too great, we simply cannot perform the MEDEVAC.

b. Non-impairment of the primary missions and training;

This case clearly did not meet this criteria. First, a helicopter on a primary mission was diverted and did not complete either the primary or the MEDEVAC mission. A duty helicopter was then devoted to this mission which may have hampered the air stations ability to perform other primary missions (i.e. SAR response). To compound matters, the responsibility for the body, when it was not accepted by the ambulance crew, further tied up the resource. I imagine in an emergency the flight surgeon could have been left standing on the ramp with the body.

The relative priority of this type mission is lower, primarily because the patient is already in a medical facility receiving medical care.

c. The emergency is genuine and involves actual lifesaving or reduction of disability;

This case falls within this criteria. Because the sending hospital did not have the facilities to adequately deal with the injuries sustained by the patient, the move to a better facility was needed to preserve the patients life.

d. Noncompetitive with available and adequate commercial air ambulance service;

The investigation asked the question but never gave the answer. A commercial alternative, if available, could have been the answer in this case.

e. Need for such emergency movement based on medical decisions;

The flight surgeon and sending hospital both had input, clearly a medical decision. Examples of non-medical need: hospital closer to home, hospital where family doctor practices, hospital with better food... any situation where the move is for personal reasons and not due to the treatment available.

f. Trained health care personnel to be provided by the requesting medical personnel in accordance with needs and circumstances.

Not enforced in this case. Had it been, many of the problems could have been avoided. Certainly the responsibility for the body once refused by the ambulance crew. Particularly annoying in this case was the sending hospitals refusal to provide a medical attendant because of the cost involved in returning the attendant.

The Lesson

Several things were pointed out by this case. First and foremost, if you stick to the policy as closely as possible, many problems can be avoided.

Review your quick reference card for air transportation between medical facilities, and make sure the criteria are on that card. In this particular case only a general MEDEVAC card was available and did not contain the criteria.

The Coast Guard Addendum to the National SAR Manual encourages the establishment of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agreements, and provides a sample. EMS agreements can lay out all the responsibilities, procedures, and lines of communications in advance. This can prevent the long delays in arranging transportation that happened in this case. It was nine hours from the time of initial notification to the Coast Guard that a MEDEVAC was needed, until the police accepted the body from the helo crew.

Remember that in the continental United States, the Air Force RCC at SCOTT AFB has the primary responsibility for inland SAR. This does include hospital to hospital transportation of patients. AFRCC should be contacted first to coordinate any requests. Be sure to include this in any EMS agreements and on your quick reference card.

Finally, a policy can only attempt to cover all circumstances. Your knowledge of operations, and the flight surgeons knowledge of medical considerations, are the final keys to insuring the best response to any MEDEVAC situation.

National Search and Rescue School: New and Improved...

By: LT Richard Schaefer, G-NRS-1

Efforts have begun towards expanding the role of the National Search and Rescue School. The goals are to improve SAR professionalism, get the SAR school back into the operational mainstream, make the SAR school the focal point of the SAR program, and improve the prestige of the school, nationally and internationally.

The first step of these efforts has been completed. A functional statement for the National SAR School has been finalized. The statement formalizes the National SAR School's functions, and provides for direct headquarters program manager involvement and increased liaison with the SAR school.

The functional statement includes:

1. **Mission.** To present all aspects of the broad spectrum of the search and rescue field to all students of diversified backgrounds and experience levels - and thereby promote standardization and professionalism within the search and rescue community.

2. **Functions.** In order to fulfill this mission, the Chief, Search and Rescue School, shall:

   a. Provide search planning and other SAR training, where National SAR School personnel are particularly qualified, for search and rescue personnel which include: Coast Guard, Coast Guard Auxiliary, Department of Defense, federal, state, local government, foreign, various volunteer organizations, and selected others.

   b. Develop and maintain courses to meet the needs of the previously listed students, as specified in the Systems Approach to Training, which encompasses the phases Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation.

   c. Develop and maintain SAR correspondence courses.

   d. Attend and participate in Coast Guard SAR conferences. Attend DOD and other national/international conferences, meetings and think tanks whenever possible.

   e. Host annual SAR conferences/think tanks.

   f. Maintain close liaison with the Coast Guard Research and Development Center on SAR related Research, Development, Testing and Evaluations. Visit sites of RDT&E whenever possible. Propose RDT&E projects. Review reports and identify weaknesses, errors or shortcomings and bring to the attention of the R&D Center. Stay abreast of new techniques and procedures resulting from RDT&E, and incorporate the information into courses as applicable.

   g. Encourage through class discussion / presentation, "On Scene" articles, and contact with field units, inquiries from the field on all matters of SAR related topics, and in particular search planning.

   h. Encourage SAR case study submissions through class discussion and contact with field units.

   i. Maintain liaison with the Coast Guard Operations Computer Center. Develop and maintain technical familiarity and operating expertise with the Computer Assisted Search Planning (CASP) System and Automated Mutual-Assistance Vessel Rescue (AMVER) System programs.

j. Assist in the review of the National Search and Rescue Plan, National Search and Rescue Manual, Coast Guard Addendum, and changes to these publications. Identify weaknesses, errors, or shortcomings and bring them to the attention of the Commandant (G-NRS).

k. Submit a regular column for "On Scene", the Coast Guard SAR periodical.

l. Establish and maintain the National SAR School library. Holdings should include as a minimum: references contained in the National SAR Manual, SAR statistics publications, R&DC SAR studies and technical reports, back issues of "On Scene" magazine, district OPLANs' SAR annex, SAR periodicals, SAR OPLANs from other agencies/countries, SAR case studies, and SAR research papers (CG Academy/GRAD school).

Additional sections deal with the relationships between the National SAR School and Coast Guard Headquarters.

Other efforts underway

Reevaluating appropriate audiences for SAR training. Includes CG Auxiliarists, other DOD, WPB personnel, CG pilots, other foreign, Senior CG, and station personnel. Additionally we are looking at how the training is delivered for these various groups.

Headquarters Search and Rescue, Performance Systems, and Auxiliary, Boating & Consumers Affairs Divisions, and SAR School representatives met to discuss SAR training for Auxiliarists. A plan of action has been agreed on to continue training for Auxiliarists, conduct a survey of SAR tasks performed by Auxiliarists, and then evaluate training needs prior to redesign of a course.

Exportable training to two areas (Group Woods Hole/Airsta Clearwater) is planned for FY-91 with training designed to reach implementors (search unit personnel) and evaluators (SAR supervisors) of search action plans.

Curriculum updates of existing courses. Most notably is the addition of CASP/AMVER and SARSAT sessions to the MRCC course (4th qtr FY-90). These changes were the result of feedback from the field.

Development of a Combat SAR Planners Course. The Coast Guard has been a participant in a five-service joint working group studying joint service combat SAR. One finding of the group was a need for joint service combat SAR training. In February the Coast Guard accepted responsibility for the development and hosting of a combat SAR planners course. This course has the potential for expansion of the National SAR School. The expected student throughput for a CSAR Planners Course is 160 per year. As a resident course this would be equivalent to 8 convenings.

The future

Eventually we hope to include several other functions that will draw the National SAR School and the SAR community closer together. The two most notable are:

* Publishing "On Scene" (this) magazine.

* Establishing a SAR visitation team. Visits to Rescue Coordination Centers to help standardize procedures, improve knowledge of current SAR operations, and establish an open dialogue between SAR School and RCCs.

Hook Up Your SAR Telephone Line To Caller ID Service

By: LCDR F. L. Bradham, G-NRS-1

Modern telephone technology now allows us to call forward, signal other incoming calls and many other services. One of the most recent service additions is **caller ID**. What is caller ID?

Caller ID allows the subscriber to see the telephone number of the caller displayed at the time of the incoming call. This gives the subscriber information which can prove useful for certain situations. For example, if you have this service in your home you can see who is calling before you answer. Therefore if your mother-in-law is calling, you will know it before you answer the phone. But, for the Coast Guard service this caller ID can prove highly useful for SAR purposes.

Knowing the telephone number of the caller can be very worthwhile information in SAR cases. Caller ID will help in the event the call is inadvertently disconnected, we fail to get a call-back number, a bad connection or language barrier prevents us from understanding the caller and, of course, on the occasions of suspected hoax calls.

This service is relatively inexpensive and is now available in many parts of the country. At the time of this article I found that the service is now available in Maryland and Virginia but not yet available in Washington, DC. The monthly fee to government accounts in Maryland is $8.50 for each telephone line. Equipment costs vary by type and vendor. Hardware price range is $60-$90 per unit.

All units show the incoming telephone number and some have a memory capability to show previous calls. The telephone numbers within your local service area will be displayed. If a long distance call is received and the service area of the caller has caller ID service, the area code and telephone number of that call will also be displayed. The caller does not have to be a subscriber of caller ID service for your unit to display the number.

Caller ID service availability is spreading quickly. Call your local phone company to see if you have the service available and to determine the costs. Incoming SAR numbers with caller ID service will enhance our search and rescue response.

Editors Note: On Scene would like to recognize LCDR M. J. KERSKI currently assigned to the Headquarters Plans and Evaluation Division for submitting an Idea Express *recommending the use of caller ID service in SAR.* Idea Express *has been a most successful program in generating possible new ways to improve the SAR system. The Search & Rescue Division has received several ideas and we encourage anyone with an idea which they believe may help us do our job better, quicker, or more efficiently to submit that idea.*

SARMIS & SUB-UNITS

By: LTJG Patrick Geddes, G-NRS-1

I would like to be able to open this article by announcing how much property and how many lives were saved by the dedicated active duty, reserve, and Auxiliary personnel at the Coast Guard's Search and Rescue Detachments, but I don't know, and our amazing mainframe computer doesn't know. This data is probably in the SAR database somewhere, but in most instances there is no way to tell the difference between a SAR sortie by the parent unit and a sortie by the detachment. My purpose here is to change the way people are reporting sub-unit cases so that we will have those answers.

Every sortie record on the computer is labeled with the OPFAC number of the unit responding, but SAR detachments have the same OPFAC number as their parent unit. This means that it looks to the computer as if the parent unit prosecuted the sub-unit's cases as well as its own. The current version of SARMIS, however, does offer a solution. (This is version 1.2 released in October 1988.) There is a field in the database set aside especially for the purpose of identifying sub-unit cases. On the bottom of the SARMIS OPFAC number screen, is a blank for a two-letter seasonal sub-unit code. Cases prosecuted by a sub-unit should include their code assigned in the list below. Data entered with these codes could be an important tool in decisions to continue operating these detachments, so it will undoubtedly be worth the precious seconds of your time that it takes to enter these two letters.

If there are any more detachments that deserve their very own codes, or if there are any ongoing special studies that need a code, let us know. We always welcome constructive comments, questions, or suggestions regarding SARMIS at (202) 267-1089 or FTS 267-1089.

Dist	Sub-units	Parent Unit	Code
1	Fisher's Island	Sta New London	FI
	Block Island	Sta Point Judith	BI
	Eastport	Sta Jonesport	EP
	Presidential Security Det.	Sta Portsmouth Harbor	PS
	East Moriches	Sta Shinnecock	EM
5	Fortescue	Gru Cape May	FO
	Townsends Inlet	Gru Cape May	TI
	Roosevelt Inlet	Sta Indian River Inlet	RI
7	Air Facility Charleston	Airsta Savannah	CH
	Aviation Det, Gitmo	Airsta Miami	AG
8	Dauphin Island	Gru Mobile	DI
	New Canal	Sta New Orleans	NC
9	Holland	Sta Grand Haven	HO
	Muskegon	Sta Grand Haven	MK
	North Superior	Sta Duluth	NS
	Alexandria Bay	Sta Oswego	AB
11	Colorado River (Lake Havasu)	Gru San Diego	LH
	Santa Cruz	Gru Monterey	SZ
13	Coquille River	Sta Coos Bay	CR
	Rogue River	Sta Chetco River	RR
	Air Facility Newport	Gru North Bend	NP
17	Air Facility Cordova	Airsta Kodiak, Airsta Sitka	CV

Auxiliary SAR Detachments

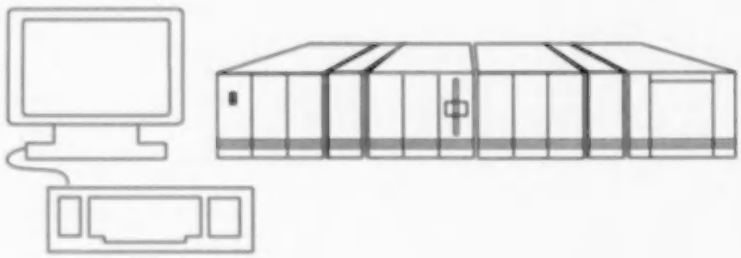
5	Bowers Beach	Sta Indian River Inlet	BB
	Bordentown	Gru Philadelphia	BT
	Delaware City	Gru Philadelphia	DC
	Lake Clark	Gru Philadelphia	LC

Special Studies Codes

Rescue Swimmer Used (AVIATION)	RS
52-foot MLB resource Used	52

District and Area Offices Get SAR Database

By: LTJG Patrick Geddes, G-NRS-1



The district SARMIS database that we told you about in the last issue of On Scene has finally arrived at each district and area office. Using a state-of-the-art version of the Progress relational database along with some other software, these offices can now quickly get SAR statistics for their individual units, their groups, or district-wide, almost as fast as the SARMIS reports are received from those units.

To get this data into the local database, called the SARMIS District Sub System (DSS), units will now send to their district (or area for area units) SARMIS reports on diskettes using the menu selection entitled "Send SARMIS Data to Diskette for Mailing." (Some people have already tried to use this function before their district was ready for it, only to get their hand figuratively slapped. Now its not just OK, its the right thing to do.) We expect most units to use the regular postal service to send the diskettes, but it is also possible for the more technically adventurous units to send the data files using Electronic Mail on the Coast Guard Standard Workstation.

Changing to a new floppy disk report allows more pieces of data to be stored in the DSS than are stored on the Headquarters database for each SAR case. The reports in the old floppy disk format don't have all the data the DSS wants, and the numbers are in different places, so those reports can't be input to the DSS. In order for districts and areas to keep track of SAR cases for this year using the new DSS, they must have the SARMIS reports in this new floppy format. This is why districts and areas are asking their units to send reports for the entire fiscal year, even if the report was already sent in the old format or on paper, not because your reports were lost. Since SARMIS data is stored at the unit's computer, the data should not have to be re-entered, and re-creating the reports will be relatively easy. Contact G-NRS-1 if you have any problems.

We appreciate the cooperation we've received from units in sending reports again. The benefit should be better and more timely feedback on missing reports, as well as more timely access to SAR statistics, without waiting for your data to be processed at Headquarters.

1990
SAR Conference

By: LCDR F. L. Bradham, G-NRS-1

The second annual SAR conference was held in Alexandria, Virginia for four days in April. As with last year's conference, the meeting provided members of the Coast Guard SAR community a forum to interact with their counterparts from all areas of the country and learn different ways of SAR execution and different methods of solving common problems. All Coast Guard OPCENs were represented to meet with Headquarters Search and Rescue Division staff, R & D Center researchers, National SAR School Instructors, other SAR Coast Guard related program representatives and NOAA officials. Due to the constructive participation of the attendees and their input prior to the conference, the conference successfully met objectives to identify ways to improve the Coast Guard SAR system and establish planning goals for the future. The success of the first two conferences has resulted in intentions to continue the conferences on an annual basis. The National SAR School has requested to host the 1991 conference.

The meeting agenda was established after an excellent response from the OPCENs listing issues and topics most important to their SAR operations and administration. Some of the important topics covered during the conference were:

Readiness Response:

Does the Coast Guard have a service-wide standard for response? Yes, B-0 readiness means the primary resource is underway or launched within 30 minutes of a directing order. The annual Coast Guard wide standard is for 90% of all SAR responses to achieve this 30 minute time frame. Also, coverage of a SAR unit's area of responsibility is based on a two hour time frame including the time to get underway. Therefore, the national goal is for SRUs to be underway within 30 minutes and to be on scene within 90 minutes from time underway.

Computer Assisted Search Planning (CASP):

Since last year's SAR conference a considerable amount of work has been done by members from the Operations Computer Center, and Academy to alleviate recent problems with CASP. Several

software corrections to CASP were made just prior to the conference. This team will continue their efforts through FY 1991 to correct and improve CASP. A rewrite and technology upgrade of CASP is in FY 1992 funding to be completed by FY 1995. Recommendations made during the conference regarding CASP included establishing a standard format to enable international use of the system, include a manual drift program to assist in simpler search cases and coastal drift computations. Questions on when and where CASP should be used were brought up. New directives are forthcoming in the CG Addendum to the National SAR Manual establishing when CASP must be used as a planning tool. SAR School is recommencing CASP instruction in the MCC course. A CASP correspondence course is also available through the CG Institute.

SARSAT/EPIRBs/ELTs:

A considerable portion of the conference was devoted to SARSAT due to many changes taking effect in the system. Additional LUTs are to be constructed and, of course, the growth in the use of the 406 MHz beacons will greatly affect Coast Guard response to beacon alerts. The amount of SARSAT data and number of first alerts have decreased since the MCC has begun operations under NOAA. District OPCENs recommended that Headquarters publicize the benefits of a 406 MHz EPIRB as much as possible. It was also recommended that the Coast Guard Auxiliary play an important role in advocating the 406 EPIRB and also include EPIRB inspection for battery life and instruction in use in their courtesy inspection program. As will be directed in the new Addendum, Coast Guard policy will be to launch on a 406MHz alert. The final day of the conference was devoted entirely to SARSAT with a tour of the NOAA USMCC and presentations by USMCC staff and watch officers.

Flare Case Planning:

Common problems with planning searches for flare sightings were discussed. The new Addendum will include a recommended worksheet and planning procedures for flare cases. Tables will be available to establish a mini/max datum for flare sightings based on general descriptions given by a reporting source. Recommendations were made by OPCEN personnel to have flare manufacturers include in the flare package instructions on the use of white flares or eliminate the white test flares entirely.

Hoaxes:

A timely discussion ensued during the conference regarding what the Coast Guard should do with suspected hoax cases. The First District OPCEN shared a new district policy regarding false alarm or hoax cases. The Search and Rescue Division is now routing a proposed Coast Guard wide policy to be included in the new Addendum. The accepted standard remains that the Coast Guard shall respond to all distress calls without delay even if the call is suspected to be a hoax.

Research and Development:

Staff from the Coast Guard Research and Development Center shared the latest findings of ongoing SAR projects. Results of night vision goggle tests demonstrate that goggles used on helicopters produced sweep widths comparable to daylight searches for PIWs with reflective tape on their PFDs. Data seems to indicate that goggles are not too effective when searching for PIWs without reflective tape on their PFDs. A group consensus was reached on the high desire to have self-locating datum marker buoys (DMBs) for ready use on SAR cases. Reliable self locating buoys are now being used by the International Ice Patrol for operations and the R & D Center for research and the use of these buoys on SAR cases would save considerable search time and also help provide long-term current data. G-NRS inquired of the RCCs whether an Environmental Products Center or Operational Oceanographic Center would be of benefit. Feedback was positive stating that having ready expertise for gathering and analyzing data for an ongoing maritime SAR case would be most helpful. Also, expertise in these areas would greatly benefit the marine environmental response community.

Computers:

Many of the operations centers complained about the number of different hardware systems and software programs they must learn to use. Ways to combine systems must be found to standardize to improve coordination and system support. Guidance from Headquarters is badly needed and the matter will be addressed. Discussions regarding SARMIS pointed out that some of the data seems to be lost, for example, data on PIW. Some of the data in the SARMIS system remains at the district data level and is accessible by the district but not by Headquarters. Districts should use this more detailed data for their own planning and report use.

Also, Headquarters will coordinate establishing an E-mail link between G-NRS and each District (osr) or (opc).

VHF/DF Net:

The operations centers strongly recommend that Headquarters pursue funding to establish a service wide coastal VHF-FM direction finding network. This item has been often discussed and the recent problems with hoax calls emphasizes the need for this system. Existing Coast Guard high sites could be utilized to begin the network and the benefit to set good positions for those in distress will be immediate. Considerable search time with surface and air resources could be eliminated. (Since the Conference, Commandant (G-T) has developed RCPs for FY92 to upgrade high-level sites to include a Coast Guard wide VHF-FM DF net.)

Rescue Swimmers:

Headquarters Aviation Division presented the latest information regarding the Coast Guard helicopter rescue swimmer program. All air stations will have qualified RSs in their duty rotation by the end of FY 1991. These personnel are trained as swimmers and EMTs. They are not allowed to swim into or under capsized or sunken vessels or other objects to attempt to remove trapped personnel. Commandant policy does allow the swimmers to reach under or into the vessel to attempt to pull someone free. Also, cutter swimmers are not deemed to be rescue swimmers. Cutter swimmers are to always remain tethered and their purpose is to assist someone back to the boat or cutter. In the event someone is trapped in a capsized boat or sunken vessel, OPCENS are to use diving resources.

National SAR School:

The SAR School staff presented the conference an overview of the schools teaching schedule and feedback received from students after they have returned to the field. A few of the interesting comments were, "My Group OPCEN doesn't have a chart table and we do not do overlays for search areas", "The District makes us do aircraft search planning and we have not been trained how to do that", "SMC remains at the station level on most cases, my Group OPCEN doesn't monitor those cases very closely". The conference discussion clarified some of the points illustrated by these anecdotal comments. SAR case files should always include a copy of the layout for the search areas planned and covered. As directed in the National SAR Manual, the SMC is never assigned below the command level designated to do search planning which in the Coast Guard is the group level. Requests were made for the school or someone provide Spanish language training for OPCEN personnel assigned to GANTSEC and Japanese training for MARSEC would be most beneficial. Recommendations were made for the SAR school to add international instructors to increase the Coast Guard's role as a world leader in SAR, add SAR training at ATC, Mobile for pilots, return CASP instruction to the MRCC course, visit District OPCENs on an annual basis, and establish continuous information loop with OPCENs to advise on unique or complicated cases.

The dialogue continued into the breaks

International SAR:

Mr. Dan Lemon of G-NRS briefed the conference on some of the latest aspects of maritime SAR in the international community. The OPCEN controllers were advised that we should not emphasize our being a military organization when dealing with foreign governments on a SAR case. The U. S. now has an international agreement with the U.S.S.R. It was emphasized that the highest priority for international agreements rests with the SAR regions which are adjacent to foreign SAR boundaries. SAR Radar Transponders (SARTs) are being required by SOLAS for lifeboats on merchant vessels. The sweep widths for SART searches is 5nm for a merchant vessel and 12 nm for aircraft. A 9GHz radar on the search platform is needed. Copies of a pending change to the IMO Manual were shared. The new manual will include sweep width tables for merchant vessels to use and the OPCENs need to

have this manual in order to coordinate searches using merchant vessels. When an OPCEN has questions regarding relations with a particular foreign country call Flag Plot. COMLANTAREA has good liaison with the United Nations and may prove helpful from time to time.

Case Studies:

Controllers requested that Headquarters use On Scene as a means to share case information to the field. Case studies have decreased over the last few years and we must find ways to share experiences and newly discovered solutions. An E-mail bulletin board could also be used. The new Addendum will include directives on when case studies will be required and the SAR school will be included in the case study routing.

Manpower and Staffing of OPCENs:

Again, as last year the controllers were most concerned about the lack of manpower and workload demands placed on operation centers. Operation centers are no longer just SAR RCCs and much is expected of these centers in terms of after normal working hours district administration, coordination and direction of law enforcement activities, marine environmental response, etc. Pipeline training to SAR school is a must for controllers and assistant controllers and better scheduling of transfers and reliefs must be done to lesson the impact of short manning. The RCC program manager for OPCENs is G-NRS while the communications and ADP/IRM manager is G-T. It was recommended that G-NRS work closely and proactively with G-T to eliminate some of the duplication in hardware/software and lack of support problems the OPCENs are now suffering with. Staffing standards need to be developed for OPCENs based on workload created by the multimission Coast Guard and also on SAR case load and duration of cases. A documentation standard should be developed to measure OPCEN workload created whether the work is LE, SAR, ATON, MARDEZ, administration, etc. The First District shared the pros and cons they had experienced since their OPCEN had been reorganized as a separate branch and was no longer responsible to (osr). Suggestions were made by G-NRS and those districts using reserves that the reserve program may be an excellent resource for augmenting the watchstanders. Flag Plot, some districts and a number of groups have reserves relieving the watch on weekends and during their active duty for training periods. Having a dedicated reserve detachment training and actually augmenting could prove wonders for MARDEZ exercises and maybe more importantly, in the event of a disaster. They can be called up to stand ready watches almost immediately.

Coast Guard Wins Assault Case Against Commercial Salvor

By: LCDR Peter K. Mitchell, Deputy Commander, Group San Francisco

Editor's note: Because this case was initiated by a distress call in addition to the mariner's refusal of commercial assistance, Station San Francisco acted in accordance with procedures of the Maritime SAR Assistance Policy.

San Francisco, CA: On May 15, 1990, a jury returned a guilty verdict in a case involving an assault on Coast Guard boat crew members during a search and rescue mission. The trial, held at the federal courthouse in San Francisco, lasted four days. The jury heard testimony from the Coast Guard crew and listened to a communications center tape of the incident. The defendant also testified.

The incident occurred on June 15, 1989. A Station San Francisco 41-footer responded to a distress call from a pleasure boat that had lost power in the channel of South San Francisco Bay. After finding the boat adrift in shallow water, the 41-footer returned to meet another Station San Francisco boat which brought a 10-foot inflatable boat. When the 41-footer returned to the scene, a local commercial salvor had arrived. When the vessel in distress requested Coast Guard assistance, the inflatable was launched.

Proceeding in 3- to 5-foot seas in 25-knot winds, the inflatable found another obstacle, the commercial salvor. The salvor used his 25-foot twin stern drive vessel to first block the inflatable, then to make a high speed pass directly at it. Through skill and perseverance the crew was able to reach the distressed vessel which was dragging anchor toward the lee shore, now only 100 yards away. By working closely with the crew of four aboard the pleasure vessel, the inflatable was able to take it in tow toward the channel. However, it found its way once again blocked by the salvage vessel. Unable to maneuver due to its tow, the inflatable hit the salvage vessel, lost way, and the inflatable and its tow were blown to the shore. In this area the shoreline consists of broken concrete chunks with rebar, the thickness of a finger, protruding.

Fearing for the safety of its tow, the crew of the inflatable jumped into the waist-high water and held the pleasure boat off the broken concrete. The waves rose to their necks, and one crewman was almost crushed when he lost his footing on the slippery bottom. The coxswain of the 41-footer, seeing his crew in this life-threatening situation, moved in despite the dangers posed by the shallow water. He pulled the pleasure boat to safety, and the inflatable crew retreated to higher ground. Ultimately, the crew members relaunched their boat, which had been tossed ashore by the waves, and rejoined the 41-footer.

A key piece of evidence was the tape recorded during the incident at Group San Francisco's communications center. In addition to showing the professionalism of the 41-footer crew through radio transmissions, it recorded threats made by the salvor over the radio that he would prevent the inflatable from helping the pleasure boat. The tape also recorded cellular telephone traffic from the crew of the 41-footer which provided a simultaneous description of the salvor interfering with the crew of the inflatable.

Due to the seriousness of the case, the Coast Guard requested that the U.S. attorney for the Northern District of California bring assault charges pursuant to 18 U.S.C. 111 against the salvor. The jury took only 20 minutes to convict him. Sentencing will be held on August 15.

National SAR School – Niagara Falls, New York

By: Charles W. Telesco, Flotilla 03–01, Division III, 9ER, USCG Auxiliary

Standing (Left to Right) John F. Shuart (09E–03), Jim Fischer (09E–04), Ross L. Kerfe (09E–03), George Egan (09W–05), Reuvers D. Grimshaw (09E–01), Nicholas J. Marinelli (09E–04), Joseph D. Sweetko (09E–05), Melbourne D. Stansbmyer (09E–01), Robert L. Knoble (09E–03), John R. Mylin (02W–02), James T. Clauss (09E–03), Dale Cawthorne (09E–06), David Hastings (09E–04), Richard Cook (09W–05), Richard J. Sullivan (02N–02), Louis M. Meruacco (09E–03), Tom Heald (09–03), Salvatore R. Conti (09E–05), David L. Hadley (09E–03). Seated Center Row (Left to Right) Robert Colby (09C–15), Dennis F. Krusnicki (09C–12), George H. Moore (09E–04), Suzanne M. Moore (09E–04), Ernest L. Aponte (09E–04), Marlene E. Meruacco (09E–03), Linda L. Bowers (09E–05). Seated Front Row (Left to Right) LCDR Gerry Donohoe (LEAD INSTRUCTOR), Master Chief William Smitley (INSTRUCTOR), Commander Steve Cornell (COMMANDER, GROUP BUFFALO), Commodore Rupert Harris (AUXILIARY COMMODORE, 9TH EASTERN REGION), Chief Quartermaster David Ginsberg (INSTRUCTOR), Jeff Mahl (09E–03).

Springville, Ohio; Champaign, Illinois; Buffalo, New York; Erie, Pennsylvania; Dubuque, Indiana; Waukesha, Wisconsin; and Saginaw, Michigan were just a few of the cities and states represented at a five–day United States Coast Guard National Search and Rescue (SAR) School held recently in Niagara Falls, New York .

Some twenty–seven Coast Guard Auxiliarists attended this comprehensive week–long program, hosted by the 9th District, Eastern Region. Instruction was designed to better prepare each Auxiliarist for future Search and Rescue missions on the waterways that they volunteer to patrol. The instructors, from the United States Coast Guard Reserve Training Center, National SAR School in Yorktown, Virginia, took each of the students through a step–by–step look into the latest techniques in search patterns, weather, search locations, information gathering, tides & currents, and the assignments of available resources.

In his commencement address, Lieutenant Commander Gerry Donohoe, SAR School Lead Instructor, noted, "You have just completed one of the best and most sought after schools offered by the Coast Guard Auxiliary – I congratulate you on a job well done. You should feel proud of your accomplishments, but your work is not completed. The job is not finished." He went on to state, "You must continually practice and refine your skills. The task is arduous, but the rewards – the saving of a life – are well worth the hard work."

Beach Rescue Techniques

By: BM1 Arnold LeCompte, USCG Station Tillamook

Station Tillamook Bay is located on the northern Oregon Coast. This region is known for its great salmon fishing and natural beauty which attracts thousands of people during the summer months.

This station responds to several cases each year in which a beach party is used. The following are rescue techniques that we practice.

Safety is the primary concern therefore it is mandatory that all personnel on the rescue team be outfitted in an anti exposure suit (preferably a wet or dry suit), helmet, and pyro vest with a knife. The rescue swimmer should also be outfitted with a Sterns Vest to provide extra flotation that is sometimes needed in beach rescue situation. We have found that the most effective beach rescue team consists of 5 people, 1 swimmer, 3 line tenders and 1 person handling communications between the rescue team and the station. These techniques can be preformed with as few as 3 people if they are properly trained.

Upon arrival, the designated swimmer immediately dons the swimmer harness. When the victim is sighted all the swimmer has to do is clip on the tending line and they are ready to go.

The tenders primary responsibility is to assist the swimmer. This can best be accomplished by keeping as much of the tending line out of the water. This is done by holding the line as high as possible, over their heads. If the line is not tended properly it will be swept by currents within the surf zone and can actually pull the swimmer away from the direction they want to go. One tender remains on the beach, this person handles the tending line as it comes out of the pouch/off the reel. The other tenders go into the water no further than waste deep. If they go in deeper than this there is a good chance they may be swept off their feet by currents making it difficult to preform their job effectively. The tenders position themselves at equal distances from each other. It is also important that the line tenders stay in line with the swimmer, this reduces the amount of line that will have to be let out, the more line used, the more difficult the swimmers job becomes.

Current is another factor to consider during beach rescue. The rougher the surf conditions the faster the current will be moving. It is important that personnel attempting a beach rescue operation are familiar with long-shore and rip currents, and understand how these currents will affect them. During one of the drills we conducted, the swimmer was deployed for about 10 minutes, during this period the beach rescue party traveled approximately a quarter mile down the beach. Long-shore currents on this day were estimated at 1 to 1.5 kts, surf conditions were up to 6 ft.

Rip currents, which are currents that take the incoming water back towards the ocean can be used effectively when preforming beach rescues. The swimmer can use these currents to reach the victim faster.

To use currents effectively, time must be spent observing beach conditions to learn how these currents affect your area.

The natural tendency upon arrival is for personnel to run to the water line and start looking. We have found that lookouts are much more effective if they take a position higher up on the beach. A technique we use is to keep our rescue vehicle high on the beach, and position a person on top of the vehicle to act as lookout. This has also proven effective after the swimmer has been deployed. A problem the swimmer often has is keeping the person in distress in sight. Keeping a lookout on top the rescue vehicle constantly pointing towards the victim acts as a quick reference for the swimmer to ensure their going in the right direction. A red flag is used by the lookout to make it easier for the swimmer to see which direction they are pointing. If the rescue vehicle is used in this manner, it should also move along the beach staying in line with the swimmer.

The techniques we use for beach rescue have proven effective, and in order to remain as such, training must be conducted. We have incorporated a semiannual training plan for all personnel at this unit. One of these training sessions will take place in May, prior to the summer SAR season.

Last year, one week after this training was conducted, we responded to a call in which a beach party was used. Upon arriving on scene, a distressed swimmer was sighted approximately 100 yards off shore, using the techniques described, our beach party was able to save this person.

If you think these techniques might be applied to your area and if you have any questions or suggestions, please contact BM1 LeCompte, Station Tillamook Bay, Oregon FTS 396-9301, commercial, (503) 322-3531.

1. Line tender tending the line as it comes out of the pouch.

2. Line tenders and swimmer.

3. Line tender trying to keep as much line out of the water as possible.

4. Rescue vehicle being used as a lookout platform.

5. Swimmer approaching victim.

6. Tenders pulling in swimmer and victim

EXCOMMS Comes Through: Rescue of The S/V MISCONDUCT

By: LT Jeff Hughes, Controller Coast Guard Atlantic Area

At approximately 2300 08 May 90, Coast Guard Group Woods Hole monitored a distress broadcast on 2182khz. The message was rather garbled, and while several Coast Guard Stations attempted to establish communications with the distressed craft nothing further was heard. Group Woods Hole immediately passed what was understood from the message, "MAYDAY, TAKING ON WATER, HIT SUBMERGED OBJECT, POSITION 33-14N 063-30W", to the First District Operations Center.

The First District passed the information to the Atlantic Area Operations Center and directed Woods Hole to review their communications tapes. For Atlantic Area, the communications investigation was just beginning. The initial position was about 90 miles northeast of Bermuda, but Bermuda Harbor Radio had not received the distress message. Calls to CINCLANTFLT and COMNAVAIRLANT indicated that there were no Navy units in the area. Checks conducted via AMVER SURPIC produced several vessels in the immediate vicinity. Just when things looked like they would come together Woods Hole completed the review of their tapes; the distress position was 90 miles NORTHWEST of Bermuda, but they did produce a vessel name. A follow up call with COMNAVAIRLANT indicated a P-3 was airborne and could respond to this position.

Armed with a vessel name, MISCONDUCT, an Urgent Marine Information Broadcast was issued as well as an INMARSAT(International Maritime Satelite) Group Call. While RCC Bermuda reviewed past customs records, Atlantic Area conducted a LEIS(Law Enforcement Information System) records search. The best that LEIS could produce was a sighting in the Caribbean in December 1989. Bermuda found more information. Past records indicated that the vessel often called in Bermuda, carried an EPIRB, had an eight man Givens life raft and normally carried four to five persons.

Then we hit the jackpot! The UMIB produced a vessel which had overtaken the S/V MISCONDUCT on 6 May. But this sighting also produced more position uncertainty. Based on dead reckoning, the MISCONDUCT could not likely be north of Bermuda. In the mean time, Elizabeth City Air Station had recalled a C-130 crew in record time and was ready to respond. All they needed was a search area! The C-130 was launched with basically a trackline search south of Bermuda based on a dead reckoned position of the target vessel.

With the C-130 about halfway to the search area two key events took place. First, SARSAT received a first alert in the vicinity of our search area, then the Navy P-3 indicated no signs of distress were located in the position to the northwest of Bermuda. Search areas were quickly modified to concentrate both air resources south of Bermuda. Moments after arriving on scene, the C-130 detected an ELT. Seven minutes into the search, Coast Guard 1501 located four persons from the S/V MISCONDUCT, safe in a raft 120 miles southwest of Bermuda (240 miles from the initial incident position!). A passing merchant vessel was quickly vectored to the scene by CG 1501 and recovered all safely.

This case exemplifies why EXCOMMS are so critical to the successful execution of a Search and Rescue case. There were over thirty-eight phone calls, an INMARSAT Group Call, three AMVER SURPIC's and one LEIS entry made on this case in which the survivors were recovered only eight hours after the initial distress call. Without the research of Group Woods Hole and RCC Bermuda, the position of distress could not have been determined until the SARSAT composite approximately seven hours after the initial distress call. This would have inordinately extended the time the survivors spent adrift.

The effort expended in establishing a better datum in this case was noteworthy. If the research from RCC Bermuda and the information gained through the UMIB had not been exploited, the entire search effort would have been concentrated North and West of Bermuda. This case also shows how essential an EPIRB can be in assisting search units to locate distressed mariners.

Resources For Underwater SAR (Continued)

The CG Does Have Divers, Too

By: LCDR F. L. Bradham, G-NRS-1

In On Scene 1/90, I recommended that Coast Guard operations centers and stations maintain a ready list of local diving resources for underwater emergencies. I stated these resource lists were important because the Coast Guard does not maintain diving resources.

Oops, I knew the Coast Guard has divers, and highly trained and most competent ones at that. When I was in the field , I became familiar with our Coast Guard divers and know of people alive and enjoying life today because they were rescued by Coast Guard divers.

As most of us know, the availability of Coast Guard divers has lessened considerably over the past few years, but there are still some very qualified divers in our ranks.

The diver billets on operational units are now limited to our two Polar Class ice breakers and some of the 180 foot (WLB) buoy tenders in the Fourteenth Coast Guard district. SAR professionals serving the operational areas frequented by these cutters should learn their capabilities and availability and, of course, put them in your quick reference card system.

I appreciate a Coast Guard diver pointing out my error in the last edition of On Scene. I am happy to recognize my mistake and correct it by taking the opportunity to highlight the service of this small group of Coast Guard specialists doing a most demanding job for us all.

The Headquarters program manager for Coast Guard divers is the Ice Operations Division COMDT (G-NIO). They welcome calls from anyone wishing to learn more about Coast Guard diving operations.

SAR School SITREP

By: CDR H. E. Blaney, Jr., National SAR School Chief

The National SAR School is alive & growing at RTC Yorktown. Since our arrival here last fall, we have presented 16 classes and graduated over 350 students, including the School's 1000th international student & 6000th Coast Guard student.

The SAR community has drawn a little closer, in Yorktown anyway, as the SAR School Chief is now responsible for oversight of the UTB Systems Center, the Coast Guard's premier source of UTB expertise & training.

The School recently presented a highly successful training session in Combat SAR for members of all five branches of the service who would be participating in the joint exercise Ocean Venture '90. Look for more CG leadership in this new field.

On the Horizon -- Reps from G-NRS & the SAR School will be traveling to Algeria to assess the SAR training needs of the Algerian Air Force. A Fall '90 class is anticipated. The School will also host a special SAR class for students from various South Pacific island nations in July.

Receipt of SAR case studies is on the upswing. Several good ones have come across our desks in the past few months. Keep 'em coming.

Hail & Farewell

MAJ Rick Douglas has joined the SAR School staff, reporting in from Korea where he & his helo crew were honored as the Air Rescue Service's Air Crew of the Year. The award was given after a particularly hairy medevac performed along the North/South Korean border.

QMC Bob PRELI has left the School & walked down the hall to take charge of the QM "A" School. We'll miss you, Chief. Taking his place will be QMC Bob COSTER coming from CGC YOCONA.

Brake Wash System For Small Boat Trailers

By: MKC Kenton R. Danielson, USCGC JARVIS

Editor's note: The following article is an idea that was submitted by Chief Danielson to be used as a Beneficial Suggestion. It is ON SCENE's intention to make our readers aware that products do exist to ease the burden of trailer maintenance.

Small boat trailers exposed to salt water have a severe maintenance and safety problem with corrosion inside the brake drums. In the past it has been impossible to remove corrosive salt from inside brake drums without removing them, this takes 3 man hours each time the trailer is exposed to salt water. Repairs to the brake system of a tandem axle trailer will cost $500-$600, depending on the make and model, if salt is not removed after each exposure.

The brake wash kit will flush each brake assembly with fresh water in a matter of minutes by supplying fresh water through a "sprinkler" head mounted inside each brake assembly.

Installation time would be approximately 4 hours for a tandem axle trailer. If a trailer is exposed to salt water only once and the salt is not removed, the brakes will require major repairs within a year.

Many units do not realize the severity of damage their trailer brakes have incurred over the year. Corroded brakes operate erratically if at all, creating a severe safety hazard, especially when hauling heavy boats like a 22' UTL or a 21' TANB.

Should more information concerning trailer brake wash systems be needed, Chief Danielson has agreed to be the point of contact. He can be reached at the USCGC JARVIS, FTS Phone 551-2400, Commercial Phone (808) 541-2400.

National Motor Lifeboat School Update

By: BM1 G. C. Catlett, National Motor Lifeboat School

Winter is over, the weather is nice, and most of you are busy with the summer SAR season. Now is a good time to start thinking about attending the National Motor Lifeboat School (NMLBS) next winter.

I would like to take a couple minutes to talk about the FY-91 class schedule, some changes in the courses we offer, short term training requests, and clarify a few items regarding transportation and messing here at NMLBS.

The FY-91 class schedule has been approved. There are a few changes from years past, notably the addition of three Engineering Supervisor classes.

The Engineering Supervisor Course has been designed for new station EPO's and group engineering personnel with little or no MLB experience. This is a basic course which familiarizes the student with MLB systems and the paperwork management necessary to properly maintain the boat.

The two week Heavy Weather Supervisors Course is designed for the non boat operator in a MLB supervisory role, such as a Group "Ready for OPs" Inspector or station CO. OINC's XPO's and other senior BM's who are boat operators should attend the three week Heavy Weather Coxswains Course.

The NMLBS is now assigning all student quotas for the courses we offer. Short Term Training Requests (CG-5223) should be routed directly to the school via your normal chain of command. Now is the time to submit training requests for FY-91 classes as well as the last class of FY-90 (3wk Heavy Weather 10-28 SEP).

Finally, students need to ensure that orders reflect all accounting data and comply with special instructions. Areas that seem to be the most confusing are per diem and travel arrival times.

Your orders will be endorsed "quarters/messing available." The EDF charges the per diem rates for meals. Even if you hold a government Diners Club card you must draw enough per diem to pay for your meals. Mess bills may be paid by check or money order.

The Portland airport is 100 miles from the school. Ground transportation between Portland and Ilwaco is practically nonexistent; therefore, a government vehicle is sent to transport you to the contract motel. All students flying in must arrive at the airport by 1600 on the Sunday before class convenes to take advantage of this service. You must call the school, no later than Wednesday the week before class convenes, with your flight information.

If you can't meet the Sunday (1600) deadline, fly in Saturday and take the shuttle to a hotel (we recommend the Executodge) for the night. The school will endorse your orders for the extra day. Another vehicle run will not be made to the airport for late arrivals.

This is a fast paced course. In order for you to meet all course objectives and graduate, you must arrive ready for training.

We look forward to seeing you at the school. Remember, we're only a phone call away anytime you have questions about a course or the MLB. FTS 396-9305 or for those without FTS, 1-800-882-8921.

NMLBS Class Schedule for FY-91

1-91	Three Week Coxswain	01 Oct	-	19	Oct	'90
2-91	30 FT SRB	22 Oct	-	24	Oct	'90
3-91	Two Week Supervisors	29 Oct	-	09	Nov	'90
4-91	One Week Engineering Supervisor	12 Nov	-	16	Nov	'90
5-91	Three Week Coxswain	26 Nov	-	14	Dec	'90
6-91	30 FT SRB	17 Dec	-	19	Dec	'90
7-91	Three Week Coxswain	07 Jan	-	25	Jan	'91
8-91	One Week Engineering Supervisor	28 Jan	-	01	Feb	'91
9-91	30 FT SRB	28 Jan	-	30	Jan	'91
10-91	Three Week Coxswain	04 Feb	-	22	Feb	'91
11-91	Two Week Supervisor	04 Mar	-	15	Mar	'91
12-91	Three Week Coxswain	18 Mar	-	05	Apr	'91
13-91	30 FT SRB	08 Apr	-	10	Apr	'91
14-91	Two Week Supervisor	15 Apr	-	26	Apr	'91
15-91	Three Week Coxswain	06 May	-	24	May	'91
16-91	30 FT SRB	27 May	-	29	May	'91
17-91	One Week Engineering Supervisor	03 Jun	-	07	Jun	'91
18-91	Two Week Reserve ADT	10 Jun	-	21	Jun	'91
19-91	Three Week Coxswain	09 Sep	-	27	Sep	'91

Preparing For That "URGENT" Call For Help

By: BM2 W. B. Wallace, USCG Station Portsmouth, VA

A recent SAR case that a Coast Guard unit responded to brought out a reminder that a few minutes either way can prevent the rescuers from becoming the rescued. I hope this story can provide someone with a little foresight in preparing for that "URGENT" call for help!

During the early days of spring, it's easy to forget how quickly hypothermia can set in. Although the air temp may be comfortable, the temperature on the surface of the water is considerably cooler.

Approximately 1630 on a sunny, mild afternoon, a local tug reported a small vessel had capsized and three people were in the water near a major shipping lane. The tug operator reported he was pushing a loaded barge and did not know if he could respond. He also stated the survivors had climbed on top of the capsized boat and appeared to be O.K..

Back at the station, the duty section was out playing basketball in the parking lot when the phone call came in from the Group.

"Get your boat underway now!! A boat has capsized with three persons in the water!!"

The watch stander ran out to the court and relayed the message. The coxswain grabbed the keys to the 22' Sea Ox, and bolted down to the boat dock. The crewman had already boarded the Sea Ox and was wearing a type III PFD from the console. The engineer was the last to arrive wearing a type V survival suit. The boat was underway within two minutes of the initial call, but were they well prepared?

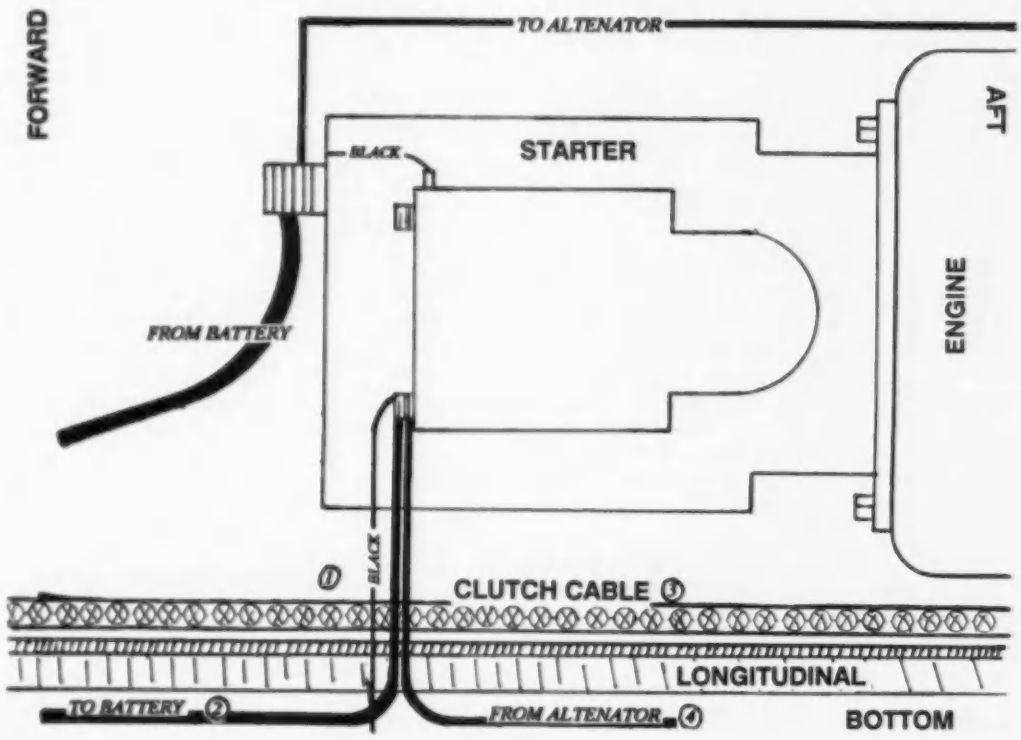
While the 22 footer was enroute, the tug had managed to maneuver to the capsized boat and retrieved the survivors from the chilly water. When the 22 footer arrived, the tug captain was upset: The Coast Guard had responded in a boat without a cabin and with minimal first aid gear. All three survivors were on board the tug, sitting on the mess deck drinking coffee to warm up. The owner of the boat stated they had been in the water only five or ten minutes. One of the men was suffering moderate hypothermia, the other two were shivering less severely. In total, maybe 30 minutes had transpired.

The coxswain of the 22 footer radioed back requesting a 41' UTB for assistance in transporting the survivors. The Station OOD, also a qualified coxswain, had no engineer and could not respond. By this time the tug captain was very irate. He had a deadline to meet and was already behind schedule. The coxswain persuaded the tug captain to carry the three persons to the closest dock where an ambulance would be standing by. In turn, the 22' Sea Ox Towed the capsized boat, which had been secured alongside the tug, to a local boat ramp.

The tug carried the survivors to the dock where they were treated and released from the local hospital. All's well that ends well right? Not quite. The sun set about an hour after the incident took place. 51 degree sea water temp and a brisk 15 knot wind out of the North East kicked up and the air temp dropped from 72 degrees to 50 degrees. The engineer had to drive the boat back to the station while the coxswain and crewmember were huddled together under the canopy top at the stern of the boat, using the spot light to generate heat. Neither the coxswain nor the crewman had remembered the station policy: One must carry or wear a survival suit at all times until the sea water temp is above 60 degrees. Lesson learned. All small boat stations have a thirty minute response time if in a B-0 status. In that time frame, the entire crew must be adequately dressed for the mission. Getting underway in less than a minute is nice-but not if it sacrifices complete preparation. In addition make the right choice for your response unit. In this case, a 41' UTB would have been more practical. The moral of the story is; don't become a hazard of quick response. When that call comes, take a second to remember the essentials.

Electrical Fire Hazard Aboard 41' UTB's

By: BMC F. A. Amos, Officer in Charge, CG STA Los Angeles / Long Beach



(Figure 1)

Editor's note: The following article was forwarded to G-NRS to make it known that a potential fire hazard may exist with 41' UTB's.

This report constitutes a summary of written statements from BM3 Savinski, MK3 Magee, BM2 Stephens and YN2(BM) Cadiz, USCGR, who were crewmembers on board CG 41373 on June 3, 1990. While underway on a case, CG 41373 experienced a class charlie/alpha fire with a disabled vessel in stern tow. The tow was later taken by the Long Beach Lifeguard boat due to the disabling of CG 41373.

At approximately 1930 crewmembers on board 41373 noticed an unusual noise coming from the main console. Engines were running at 1300 RPM and all gauges showed normal readings. BM3 Savinski brought both main diesel engines(MDEs) to clutch speed and attempted to isolate the noise by separately disengaging and engaging the engines. MK3 Magee commenced an engine room investigation, but when he opened the engine room scuttle thick smoke was sighted. MK3 Magee immediately secured the scuttle and alarmed the crew. BM2 Stephens went to the engine room viewpoint, located on bulkhead 6, and visually checked the engine room pinpointing the fire to the port engine. BM2 Stephens and YN2 Cadiz grabbed PKP fire extinguishers and took them to the main deck. BM3 Savinski reported the casualty and boat position via radio then shut down both MDEs. MK3 Magee, BM2 Stephens and YN2 Cadiz opened the port MDE hatch and discharged two PKP fire extinguishers directly at the fire putting it out.

While BM2 Stephens was retrieving a CO2 fire extinguisher from the lower cabin, he spotted a secondary fire in progress under the coxswain's flat, he alarmed the crew. BM3 Savinski secured the main power panel while BM2 Stephens discharged CO2 onto the secondary fire. MK3 Magee assisted BM2 Stephens with a PKP extinguisher upon hearing the alarm.

When both fires had been reported out, MK3 Magee proceeded to the engine room to investigate the cause of fire. BM2 Stephens set a reflash watch on the lower cabin. Initial findings of MK3 Magee was port MDE starter created a short and ignited the plastic covering of the clutch cable. The fire traveled the length of the clutch cable forward through bulkhead 6.

Due to the discharge of PKP and smoke from the fire the forward escape hatch was broken out for natural ventilation. BM2 Stephens and MK3 Magee were transported to a hospital by Orange County PD boat due to inhalation of PKP. They were examined and released fit for full duty.

The actions of all crewmembers were in accordance with procedure. The removal of the escape hatch showed innovative thinking and will be the recommended procedure for boat crews at this unit.

Final findings. (Figure 1) shows source of ignition of fire. Chaffing of the battery cable, #2, on the longitudinal's edge created an electrical grounding(insulation failure). The area of failure, #1, had a tight grouping of wires, #2, #4 and cables, #3, provided fuel for a class alpha fire. The fire and electricity fused all wires and cables together. The engine room breaker did trip but is not designed to secure electrical current directly from the battery. The activation of the fixed halon system would not have prevented the spread of the secondary fire due to bulkhead 6.

Upon checking starters on the CG 41331 we found a possibility of the same hazard. Our unit has since installed chaffing material on all starter wires. The Group EM has rerouted the wires on the CG 41373 to prevent further insulation failure. The UTB is presently repaired and mechanically operational with the exception of electronics equipment reinstallation.

44 YEARS AGO

U. S. COAST GUARD TRAINING STATION

ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA

8 February, 1946

From: Commanding Officer

To : Recruit LEE, George S.

1. I welcome you into the U. S. Coast Guard. It is a tough outfit, proud of its long history of efficient service. It wants only men who are willing and eager to do their best at all times and who have the guts to see a hard job through to the very end.

2. Hard jobs are "routine" in this service. In a way, the Coast Guard is always at war: in wartime, against armed enemies of the nation and, in peacetime, against all enemies of mankind at sea: Fire, Collision, Lawlessness, Gales, Ice, Derelicts, and many more.

3. The Coast Guard therefore, is no place for a quitter, or for a cry-baby, or for a four-flusher, or for anyone who cannot "keep his eye on the ball." Your period of recruit training is a time of test, hour by hour and day by day, to determine whether or not you are made of the right material. It is up to you, as an individual, to prove your worth.

4. Here are some friendly tips:

KEEP YOUR EYES AND EARS OPEN: get all you can out of your training --- your knowledge and skill may someday save your own or some other person's life.

STUDY YOUR BLUEJACKET'S MANUAL: it is your bible.

LEARN THE REGULATIONS: keep out of trouble; stay off report. Remember that your advancement in the service will depend on your CONDUCT as well as SKILL.

WHEN IN DOUBT: ASK the officer or petty officer in charge of your detail WHAT TO DO.

Best wishes for success!

Captain, USCG
Commanding

Editor's note: Pardon me for sounding like Andy Rooney, but..."Did you ever wonder" what it was like in that "OLD GUARD" you always hear about? I think this letter welcoming new recruits to Alameda Training Station in 1946 pretty much sums it up. Also, contrary to what a lot of you are probably thinking, a "four flusher" has nothing to do with a head. By Webster's definition, "four flusher" is "to bluff in poker with a four flush. 2. Slang. To make a pretense: BLUFF."

Boat Crew Professionalism

By: CWO Jake Miller, G-NRS-2

Having temporarily misplaced my soap box, I'm going to keep this edition's column short and sweet, and use it to push some of our resident training programs. The FY91 schedules are out and are printed below. Also, there have been a few changes regarding the courses we are program manager for that you need to be aware of.

National Motor Lifeboat School - Quota control for the courses offered by the National Motor Lifeboat School has been transferred to the school. This means that your requests should no longer come to me at G-NRS, but rather be sent directly to the school in Ilwaco. Any questions or requests regarding quotas should also be directed to the school. Elsewhere in this addition is an article by the school staff which includes their FY91 schedule.

UTB Coxswain "C" (CG-063) Course - Located at the UTB Systems Center at RESTRACEN Yorktown, VA. The class duration for this course is 26 days and they train 24 students per class. The convening dates are: 15 Oct 90, 19 Nov 90, 22 Jan 91, 04 Mar 91, 29 Apr 91, 19 Aug 91. This last class will only have eight students. We are going with a schedule of less convenings with more students in each class - so you will probably need to plan ahead a little bit to make sure your people who need this training can be available for it.

Officer In Charge Course - Located at TRACEN Petaluma, CA. The class duration is 12 days. Twenty regulars and four reserves are trained per class. The convening dates are: 03 Dec 90, 21 Jan 91, 04 Feb 91, 22 Apr 91, 13 May 91, 19 Aug 91. There have been some changes at LAMS. BMCM Caldwell the course coordinator has moved on, and wish him luck with his new command, the USCGC PT NOWELL. Master Chief Caldwell was the first course coordinator and deserves the major part of the credit for making it a valuable part of our program. I just can't say enough good things about the job he did. His replacement is BMCS James Kolm. Senior Chief Kolm comes to the school from the cutter BLACKHAW. I'm sure he will be an excellent replacement and we look forward to working with him.

G-NRS still does the quota management for the cox'n and OIC courses, so you should continue to send your Short Term Resident Training Request's to me. I will continue to call you before I cut orders, but --- send those requests.

As always your comments on this column or any other subject of mutual interest are solicited and appreciated. We really do want to hear from you! It's amazing how much stuff we learn from your calls. I'm still located at COMDT (G-NRS-2) and my phone number remains (202) or FTS 267-2868.

Dear On Scene Editor,

Commandant (G-NRS-2)
Editor, ON SCENE
U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters
2100 Second Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20593

Fold on line. Seal with tape.

The deadline for submitting articles to appear in the next issue of ON SCENE is 07 SEP 90. Please try to keep them under three pages if at all possible. If you submit an article for publication and have it typed on the standard terminal, it will save us typing time. Copy the submission on a 5-1/4" or 8" floppy disk and mail it with a printed copy. ***Pictures are most welcome.*** *Please tell us if you wish the disk to be returned. Arrangements can also be made to accept articles over a modem.*

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